

ADDRESS

TO

ABOLITIONISTS.

"Let sugar be as cheap as it may be, it is better to eat none—better to eat aloes and coloquintida than violate a primary law impressed on every heart, not imbruted with avarice—than rob one human creature of those eternal rights of which no law on earth can justly deprive him."

Sir William Jones.

PHILADELPHIA:
MERRIHEW AND GUNN, PRINTERS,
No. 7 Carter's Alley.

.....

1838.

ADDRESS TO ABOLITIONISTS.

WE are not about to tell you of the existence of slavery in our "land of the free," or to inform you that nearly three millions of your countrymen are the victims of systematic and legalized robbery and oppression. This you know full well, and the knowledge has awakened your strong sympathy with the sufferers, and your soul-deep abhorrence of the system which crushes them. We mean not to prove that this system is condemned by every principle of justice, every precept of the Divine law, and every attribute of the Divine character,—or that no man can innocently sustain to his fellow man the relation it has established. You already believe this proposition, and build upon it, as a fundamental doctrine, the whole superstructure of your anti-slavery creed and plan of operations. It is not our purpose to convince you that the slave, as your brother man, has a right to your compassion and assistance. You acknowledge his claim, and profess to be his fast and faithful friends. But we would propose to you a question of weight and serious import. Having settled your principles, in the clear light of truth, by fair and thorough investigation, do you practically carry them out in your daily life and conduct? To one point we would direct your attention. Do you, into whose hands this address has fallen, faithfully abstain from using the products of the slave's extorted and unpaid labor? If not, having read thus far, do not immediately throw aside this address with an exclamation of contempt or indifference, but read it through with candor.

Before entering upon a discussion of the question, whether our use of the products of slave-labor does not involve us in the guilt of slaveholding, we ask your attention to the two following propositions, viz.: *The love of money is the root of the evil of slavery—and the products of slave-labor are stolen goods.*

I. THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF THE EVIL OF SLAVERY. We say that the whole system, with all its incidents, is to be traced to a mean and heartless avarice. Not that we suppose every individual slaveholder is actuated by a thirst for gold; but that slaveholders *so generally* hold slaves in order to make money by their labor, that, if this motive were withdrawn, the *system* would be abolished. If nothing were gained, it would not be long before the commercial staples would cease to be produced by slave-labor, and this would break the back-bone of the system.

A comparison of the history of the cotton trade with that of slavery would show that every improvement in the cultivation and manufacture of cotton has infused new vigor into the system of slavery; that the inventions of Cartwright, Whitney, and others, have diminished the proportional number of emancipations in the United States, enhanced the value of slaves, and given a degree of

stability to the robbery-system which it did not before possess. Indeed, every fluctuation in the price of cotton is accompanied by a corresponding change in the value of slaves. We copy the following statistics from the New York Herald, of November 23, 1837; they are extracted from a long "*chronological table of the cotton trade.*"

1836. Cotton farms in Mississippi, fronting on the river, sell for \$100 per acre, readily. Negro men, of prime quality, fetch from \$1,500 to \$2,000. Rapid settlement of new cotton lands. Great speculations. Heavy importations of foreign cotton goods.

1837. Cotton trade opens in a highly prosperous condition. Fall of cotton from 20 cents to 8 cents per lb. Ruin of cotton factors. General languor in cotton trade.

One other fact growing out of the fall in the price of cotton in 1837, omitted in the above extract, we here supply: to wit, that "negro men of prime quality" would fetch not more than \$400 or \$500. If any further evidence is wanted that

"The Christian brokers in the trade of blood,
Buy men and sell them, steal, and kill *for gold,*"

we refer the reader to John C. Calhoun's indignant allusion, last winter, to the nine hundred million dollars worth of slave property.

It is the love of money, then, that leads to the buying and working of slaves. And all the laws forbidding education, sanctioning cruelty, binding the conscience—in a word, all the details of the system,—flow from the buying of men and holding them as property, to which the love of money leads. Are we not, so far, correct?

II. ARTICLES PRODUCED BY SLAVE-LABOR ARE STOLEN GOODS, because every man has an inalienable right to the fruits of his own toil. It is unnecessary to prove this to abolitionists. Even slaveholders admit it. John C. Calhoun says: "He who *earns* the money—who *digs it out of the earth* with the sweat of his brow, has a just title to it against the universe. *No* one has a right to touch it *without his consent*, except his government, and *it only* to the extent of its legitimate wants; to take more, is *robbery.*" This is what slaveholders do. By their own confession, then, they are robbers.

It is no small aggravation of their offence, moreover, that *in order to get* the labor of slaves without wages, a system has been adopted which robs them of every thing else. In the language of Charles Stuart, "their bodies are stolen, their liberty, their right to their wives and children, their right to cultivate their minds, and to worship God as they please, their reputation, hope, all virtuous motives are taken away by a legalized system of most merciless and consummate iniquity. Such is the expense at which articles produced by slave-labor are obtained. They are always heavy with the groans, and often wet with the blood, of the guiltless and suffering poor."

But, say some, "we admit that the slaves are stolen property; and yet the cotton raised by their labor is not, strictly speaking,

stolen, any more than the corn raised by means of a stolen horse." In reply, we say that it *is* stolen. In every particle of the fruit of a man's labor he has a property until paid for that labor, unless it is performed under a contract, express or implied, by which he has relinquished his claims. The slave is under no such contract. He, therefore, who sells the produce of his toil before paying him, sells stolen property. If the case of the corn raised by means of a stolen horse be parallel, it only proves the duty of abstaining from that also. If it be not parallel, it proves nothing.

If, then, the products of slave-labor are stolen goods, and not the slaveholder's property, he has no right to sell them.

We are now prepared to examine the relation between the consumer of slave produce and the slaveholder, and to prove that it is guilty—all guilty. Our proposition is this:

BY USING THE PRODUCTS OF SLAVE-LABOR, KNOWINCLY, WE BECOME PARTAKERS IN THE CRIME OF SLAVEHOLDING.

If slaveholding *be* a crime, this proposition must be true, or aiding in the commission of a criminal act is no participation in the crime. Was not William Lloyd Garrison correct in holding "the proposition to be *self-evident*, that no transfer, or inheritance, or purchase, or sale, of stolen property, can convert it into a just possession, or destroy the claim of its original owner—the maxim being universally conceded to be just, that the receiver is as bad as the thief?"—*Liberator*, Vol. II., No. 1.

If the purchaser of slave produce be not a "partaker of other men's sins," where will you find such a character?

1. *He gives his sanction to the plunder of the slave.* This, at first view, seems self-evident. But some deny it, and assert that the mere act of purchasing the goods of the slaveholder is no more an approval of the injustice by which those goods were obtained, than of any other crime of which the seller may be guilty. Nay, that, with the greatest abhorrence of his injustice, the purchase of its products may be made for the very purpose of counteracting it. No man, it is said, understands the act of purchasing a bale of cotton, as admitting the morality of refusing pay to the people who hoed and picked it, any more than that it was raised, ginned, and pressed in the most economical way.

This reasoning contains a manifest fallacy. It is no better than most palpable and clumsy sophistry. The veriest child knows that the stolen property has not the same connexion with the thief's other crimes as with his act of theft; and that bad morality in the mode of procuring goods is a somewhat stronger objection to receiving them, than bad economy in their production.

That devoted friend of the suffering, Thomas Shipley, was wont to illustrate this subject by supposing that slavery had never existed in this country, and that a company should *now* be formed to prosecute some branch of agriculture or manufactures by means of coerced and unrequited toil. Who that has either conscience or

humanity would patronise that company by buying the goods it would throw into the market? Were the use of slave-labor to be now originated, we should all reject its fruits. Can its long continuance alter its moral character, or change our duty?

As to purchasing the products of injustice for the very purpose of counteracting that injustice, we have only to say, that we are not of the number of those who believe that the "end sanctifies the means," and that "we should do evil that good may come." We, therefore, re-affirm that our use of the products of slave-labor is a practical sanction of the robbery.

First. So far as that single act is concerned, it manifests a willingness, on the part of the consumer, that the rightful owner shall remain deprived of the property which has been stolen from him. In fact, if the original thief begins the injury to the rightful owner, the purchaser continues it. This seems to us a truth so plain, that argument would be wasted alike in attempting to prove or to disprove it. The inference then seems fair—at least a natural one for the robber to draw—that his offence is not thought a very atrocious one. Instead of meeting the eye of stern rebuke, and hearing the voice of condemnation, reproving his wicked act, he is, by the purchase of the stolen property, treated as an honest man, engaged in a rightful business; for

Secondly. Our buying goods of a person implies our belief in his right to sell them. Especially is this the case where the seller *claims* a right to the goods and to the disposal of them. If he has not *that* right, no one has a right to buy. By buying the products of the slave's labor, then, abolitionists practically admit either that their charge of robbery against the slaveholder is false, or that they are partakers of other men's sins.

2. Nor is this all. The purchaser of slave produce *not only sanctions crime when committed, but directly tempts to its commission.* We have already shown that the slaveholder's object is to make money. Without pay, he will no more raise cotton for *us*, than his overseer will manage his plantation for *him*. As the salary is the temptation which induces the overseer to follow that degrading employment, so the profit which we pay the slaveholder, on his rice, cotton, and sugar, is *his* temptation to enslave. You say, if there were no market for slaves the slave-trade would cease? Is it not as true that, if there were no market for slave produce, slavery would cease? The slave-buying planter is the tempter of the Guinea merchant. Is not the man who buys the fruits of the slave's labor the tempter of the slaveholder and the slave-buver?

The following extracts are so much to the point that we cannot forbear introducing them here. The first is from the pen of William Lloyd Garrison, and was published in the Liberator for April 23, 1831.

"The abettors of crime are as guilty as the perpetrators. The assertions which have been made are true—that the consumers of the productions of slave-labor contribute to a fund for supporting slavery, with all its abominations—that they are

the Alpha and the Omega of the business—that the slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, for by holding out the temptation, he is the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process—that we are called upon to refuse those articles of luxury, which are obtained at an absolute and lavish waste of the blood of our fellow men—and that a merchant, who loads his vessel with the proceeds of slavery, does nearly as much at helping forward the slave-trade, as he that loads his vessel in Africa with slaves; they are both twisting the same rope at different ends.

“A few interrogations will suffice to illustrate this business.

“If a merchant patronise a pirate, who has plundered vessels on the high seas, and pay him liberally for so doing, is he not himself a pirate in principle? Is it true that ‘the receiver is as bad as the thief?’ Is not the man who bribes his companion to stab a third person to the heart, the greater criminal of the two, though he shed no blood?

“There can be no difficulty here. Every body will answer in the affirmative. These are self-evident truths. Now for the application.

“Why are the slaves held in bondage? Certainly not to fulfil any prophecy;—not on the ground of benevolence;—not because their liberation would be dangerous;—no such thing;—but because they are profitable to their owners. Who are the principal consumers of the products of slave-labor? The free states. They furnish a good market for the South. What is this, but putting an immense bribe into the hands of the slaveholders to kidnap, steal, and oppress? Were it not for our patronage, they would be compelled to liberate their slaves. The prophecy of Mr. Randolph will then be fulfilled: the slaves will not run away from their masters, but the masters from their slaves. We are, then, the warmest and most efficient supporters of slavery, and feel no compunctions of conscience in purchasing those things which are stolen, and which have been moistened with the tears and blood of the slave. If ‘the receiver is as bad as the thief,’ surely he is more criminal who gives a *yearly salary to the robber*. Is there any flaw in the argument? Are not the cases parallel?”

The next extract will show how slaveholders reason on this subject. It is from a sermon preached in 1837, in Columbia, South Carolina, by Samuel Dunwoody, a Methodist minister.

“Another metaphysical argument of the anti-slaveholders, and upon which they lay a most unreasonable stress, is, the receiver, say they, is as bad as the thief. The idea here intended to be conveyed, is, that as slavery is morally wrong in every instance, all that are concerned with the subject, either directly or indirectly, must be guilty of moral evil.

“Suppose a West India planter should purchase a large number of slaves, for the purpose of increasing his wealth. Would he be guilty of moral evil in so doing? Most certainly, says the anti-slaveholder. But suppose he should employ these slaves in the culture of sugar and coffee, in order to make his money out of them; he must necessarily sell the sugar and coffee, the product of the slaves’ labor, in order to accomplish his main design. Every person, then, who purchases sugar or coffee, in reality encourages the slave-trade. But the anti-slaveholders at the North are in the habit of buying and using sugar and coffee; therefore, they encourage the slave-trade in so doing; and thus they are guilty of moral evil on their own principles. And, for the same reason, it would be morally wrong for a Northern merchant to buy a single bale of cotton from a Southern planter; for that is likewise the product of slave-labor.”

3. *The purchaser of slave produce is, himself, virtually the plunderer of the slaves.* This may be a startling proposition to some; and perhaps many, who are unconscious of a desire to do such a deed, and even regard it with holy abhorrence, will at once deny the charge. Still we affirm that,—wittingly or not,—they do plunder the slaves. The truth of the accusation appears from what has already been said. What we hire another to do for us, is morally our own act. He who hires an artist to engrave a counterfeit bank note, is none the less a counterfeiter because he performs none of the manual labor of preparing the plate or print-

ing the bills. And the consumers of slave produce who pay for the raising of those articles by slave-labor, are slaveholders. Where is the flaw in the argument? "None are so blind as those who *will* not see." The South understands clearly the relation of the North to the system of slavery. More than once have her distinguished men reproached us with being, in fact, the slaveholders, while they were to *us*, as really as the overseers upon their plantations to *them*, mere *agents*. What could we answer them?

OBJECTION. But, says the objector, "in order to show that our use of slave products does actually have the effect to aid and encourage the slaveholder to continue his sin, it must be shown that our abstinence will prevent, or at least tend to prevent, his continuance. And this cannot be done, without showing a reasonable probability that our abstinence will produce a sensible effect upon the market."—We answer

First. That the whole body of consumers of slave produce sustain slavery, no one denies. Each consumer is part of the whole, and whatever *the whole* does, *each part*—even though so small that its influence is too minute for calculation—helps to do. If ten million stockholders hold in equal shares a hundred thousand dollars, does not each, though contributing but a single cent, aid in promoting the common object of the investment? So with each purchaser of slave produce. The abstinence of *all the abolitionists* might not *yet* exert so great an influence upon the market as to make slave-labor *unprofitable*; but, subtracting from the total consumption so much as that of a single individual, would, to a certain degree, *diminish* its profits. "Every atom of slave produce which is used, actually and directly sustains slavery, as far as it goes." Of course, every purchaser of slave produce contributes, in a measure, to that result. "He is not the *fifty million*; all that the *fifty million* can do, therefore, he is not required to do; but he is *one*, and what *one* can do, is *required* of him." If, then, we gain no more than this, we *diminish the profits* of slavery, and thus weaken one of the man-stealer's principal motives to resist our appeals to his reason and conscience. The shrine-maker in Ephesus stopped his ears against the truth, because his business brought him great gain. Interest, real or supposed, blinds the eyes of Southern slaveholders. They would be more likely to give heed to anti-slavery arguments, if they did not think their system profitable, than if they were realizing immense wealth.

"The whole community is made up of individuals. Should every individual always take it for granted, that his own exertions in any cause could produce no good effects, all works of benevolence, which require a general co-operation, would go on but slowly. Besides, there is every prospect that, so far from any person who entered upon this cause being alone, he would soon find himself united with many others." His example would lead others to adopt the practice, and theirs would influence others, and theirs others still, until the little leaven would leaven the whole lump.

It is justly observed by a correspondent of the *Liberator*, (vol. I. p. 78,) that, "by using slave produce, each one to himself, so large a number may be kept from adopting the measure, as each one admits might, by adopting it, produce the desired effect. But the more direct answer to the objection is, that if the use of these productions is positively assisting (in however small a degree) to keep men in slavery, no one, who considers it wrong to keep them so, is at liberty to assist even to this trifling extent. Let, then, each individual, who is persuaded of the propriety of this measure, look around him, and see if there is not some *one*, if no more, whom he can influence, and induce to join in it."

Secondly. We may safely assert that, if in this measure all would unite whose avowed principles seem clearly to demand it, and all whose relations to slavery render it in some sort peculiarly their duty to do so, a *very* "sensible effect upon the market" would be produced. The Society of Friends, consistently with their testimony against the use of prize goods, and goods fraudulently obtained, of which character pre-eminently are the products of slave-labor, ought to be among the foremost in this work. They number, according to the American Almanac, 150,000. The last annual report of the American Anti-Slavery Society informs us, that there were in May, 1838, (the time when it was written,) about 180,000 members of Anti-Slavery Societies in the United States. Probably there are many abolitionists not belonging to any Society. Besides these, many persons agree with us in most points, but not in all. The co-operation of *some* of these might be reasonably expected. Indeed, some of them do now conscientiously abstain. But, without counting this last class, since its number, though doubtless large, is indefinite, and reckoning the Friends who belong to anti-slavery societies at 10,000, we have an aggregate of 320,000, whom consistency, we think, requires to withdraw at once their pecuniary aid from that system of abominations which they profess to abhor. Add to these the free colored people,—who, as in a measure identified with the slaves, might be expected to sympathize deeply with them, and to be especially ready to avoid participation in the fruits of oppression,—and the sum will exceed 600,000.

It has been computed that ten persons consume the produce of the labor of one slave. If this be correct, the abstinence of 600,000 could not but make a perceptible difference in the profits of slave-labor, and consequently in the demand for slaves. It must sensibly impair the strength of oppression's blood-cemented bulwarks.

We pretend not, from these data, to determine, with mathematical precision, by how much the number of slaves, the value of their labor, or the ratio of their increase will be diminished; or at what rate the number of voluntary manumissions would be augmented. We freely admit that circumstances exist which could hardly be

bent into an accurate estimate, and the influence of which, in modifying the result, could not with any reasonable degree of certainty be measured. Each reader is left, therefore, to carry out the calculation according to his own judgment, and to arrive at such conclusion as to him appears legitimate. But one thing all will probably concede:—that a strict adherence, by 600,000 persons, to the plan we recommend would produce *an impression*, and *that* not a small one, on the market for slave produce, and on the profitableness of slave-labor.

Thus much for the influence of abstinence on the pecuniary support of slavery. From what follows it will be seen that, even without reference to this consideration, its effect is beneficial, on however small a scale it is practised.

4. *The consumer of slave produce is a partaker in the crime of slaveholding, because, by such consumption, he withholds one very important testimony against slavery as a sin.* By abstaining from the products of slave-labor we bear a constant and powerful testimony against slavery. It is equivalent to saying that we regard it as a heinous sin. "Yonder are the hogsheads of sugar and molasses, the bales of cotton, the rice, and the indigo! Now suppose that *no one* would buy them, *because* obtained by robbery. No one consumes them--*not* because they are *not wanted*, for they *are* wanted; but because the curse of the suffering and outraged poor is upon them." Will the masters be unrebuked by such sacrifices, made rather than partake of the fruits of their sins?

In every possible way, that does not conflict with other duties, we are bound to testify against this sin. The reason of this obligation is to be found in the enormity of the evil, and in the ruin it is every moment producing. Shall we then refuse to bear our testimony against it by abstinence from its products? If "actions speak louder than words," how loudly would our abstinence declare our conviction of the sinfulness of slaveholding! And if merely proclaiming with tongue and pen and press the immorality of slavery, does so much towards promoting its abolition, how irresistible will be the effect of preaching its sinfulness by our constant practice!

Elizur Wright, jr., of New York, though dissenting from our views of duty in this matter, asserts that the practice of abstaining from West India sugar, which prevailed to some extent in Great Britain, while Clarkson was assailing the slave-trade, "produced a great and salutary effect on the minds of thousands" even of those who did not adopt it. "It was a loud and practical rebuke of slavery. It was an index of sincerity and zeal. It was an ever-present memento of the oppressed. It was truly, as our amiable coadjutors, the Friends, call it, 'a testimony.'"—Now we contend that all this the slaves *have a right to claim*,—that all this *is due* to the cause of truth and righteousness.

One word more under this head. In this controversy against slavery, as in other moral conflicts, "he who is not for us, is

against us," and he who "gathereth not with us, scattereth abroad." Refusal to join an anti-slavery society is regarded by the world as evidence either of opposition to the society, or of an indifference as fatal as opposition itself. By declining to act in any particular practicable way against slavery, we give our opponents occasion to question the sincerity of our professed convictions of its enormity, and the duty of acting vigorously for its overthrow. However faithfully or efficiently we labor in other ways against slavery, if we use its products, we to some extent give our influence in its favor, and thus counteract our own exertions. We act like the man who should set one foot upon the load he is endeavoring to lift from the ground.

5. *The consumer of slave produce is a partaker of the sin of slaveholding, because he diminishes the influence of his anti-slavery efforts.* It is probably true, generally, if not universally, of those who abstain from the products of slave labor, that, since adopting this course, they have felt a livelier zeal, a deeper abhorrence of slavery, more tenderness of conscience, and a warmer sympathy with the suffering. Elizur Wright, jr., says of the practice of the British abstainers just alluded to, "*there can be no doubt that it produced a great and salutary effect upon their own minds.*" We fully believe him. There is sound philosophy in the statement. He who abstains from slave produce, meets mementos of the slave wherever he turns. Scarcely a meal he eats, but he is reminded of the lash and the fetter and the unrequited toil. Scarcely a garment can he purchase or wear, but has a voice.

Then the consciousness that he is striving to keep his own hands clean and unpolluted with the gains of oppression, gives energy to his mind, and strength to his hand, and increased efficiency to his action in other departments of anti-slavery labor. The writer, last quoted, justly remarks, that "reformers must be, or, at least, must honestly aim to be, pure of the sin they rebuke. This is requisite, not only to commend them to the consciences of others, but to save them from the goadings of their own. 'A sinful heart makes feeble hand.'" Acting inconsistently with our avowed principles, unfits us for rebuking the errors and misdeeds of others, and of course impairs the force of our rebukes. The professed temperance man who preaches total abstinence from strong drink, and is known to take an occasional sip of brandy—however infrequent or however small—even though he should not suffer in health, or become a drunkard, could hardly expect to be a very successful advocate of the temperance cause. It may safely be doubted whether that minister of the gospel, so called, who told his congregation to do as he *said* and not as he *did*, ever made many converts to righteousness. But how much more wisely or consistently do we act, if we preach against slavery, and at the same time uphold it by consuming its products. Governor Hayne's reply to Daniel Webster on the Tariff question has not yet been forgotten. His biting retort would probably be thrown in our faces more frequently, if

the South were not afraid of thereby driving us as a body to take the consistent ground of abstinence.

As Elizabeth Heyrick truly says, "we must purge ourselves from these pollutions. Then, and not till then, we shall speak with the *all-commanding eloquence of sincerity and truth*, and all our persuasions will be backed by the *irresistible argument of consistent example*." Without that argument, can we expect to gain the same credit as with it, for the genuineness of our devotion to the cause of humanity? If we are unwilling to make the sacrifice which abstaining from slave produce requires, can we prove our readiness to do and suffer all that a strict adherence to correct principles may demand? If abolitionists refuse to forego the slave-raised luxuries which gratify the palate, or to substitute at a small advance of price the products of free labor, with what consistency can they call upon the slaveholder to make much greater sacrifices to holy principle?

Finally. Our abstinence promotes discussion of the subject of slavery. When, as often happens, we sit with others at a table spread in part with blood-bought luxuries, and our reason for declining to partake of them is asked, the answer brings at once to view the slave's condition, and naturally introduces a discussion of his wrongs and the means for their redress. This is the very thing we want. Free discussion is the vital air of abolitionism.

Such are our reasons for believing abstinence from slave produce to be a duty. To this doctrine objections have been raised, which we now proceed to consider.

OBJECTION I. Abstinence from slave produce is "the exaltation of a *physical expedient* into the place of *moral power*, for the removal of slavery"—a moral evil. "Starving is not convincing." Making slave produce unprofitable is "not an argument to the 'understanding and conscience' of any body, but an argument addressed solely to the *pockets* of the planters." "It lets down, mars, and secularizes the glorious plan of emancipation which has been adopted."

We reply: If it is our duty to avoid participation with other men's sins, it is none the less our duty, because we cannot do right without rendering it more difficult for others to do wrong. We abstain because moral principle requires it. The effect of our abstinence on the interest of the slaveholder, and, through that, on the system of slavery, is a necessary incident for which, even if it were matter of regret, we are no more responsible, than we should be for the inability of a distiller to maintain his mischievous business in consequence of our refusal to purchase his liquid poisons. The "physical expedient" is not exalted "into the place of moral power," but is merely an unavoidable consequence of the proper application of such power.

OBJECTION II. "Suppose the whole world should abstain from these products, and the slave states should thereby be compelled

formally to abolish slavery. So far as the abolition was produced by these means, it would rest on no principle but necessity,—it would be a slavish act. The sin would be unrepented of; and the chance is, that the reformation would be rather nominal than real. For there could not be, in the Southern states, as in the West Indies, hosts of special justices to watch the unwilling benefactors, and secure the rights of the weaker party."

This objection would apply with equal force against abstaining from the purchase of any species of stolen goods, and against every law ever enacted, affixing a penalty to the commission of crime. But would the objector consider it valid in these cases? If not, why in the present?

The answer to the previous objection will also apply to this. To that we may add, that, even admitting what the objector says, it is better the master should *do right* with *wrong motives*, than *do wrong* with *wrong motives*. Better reform his outward act while his heart is unconverted, than remain at once inwardly corrupt and outwardly immoral. Besides, it will be easier to convince his understanding, awaken his conscience, and effect a genuine reformation of heart as well as life, when his strongest temptation to sin is removed—when he no longer thinks that interest is on the side of vice, nor feels those continual accessions of strength to his habits of wrong-doing with which the constant tenor of his external acts now fortifies him in sin, nor finds it necessary to seek out arguments in defence of robbery and oppression, in order to vindicate his own daily practice and silence the voice of the accuser in his own bosom.

To the intimation in the objection that the slave's condition will be only nominally changed without being improved, we answer, that even admitting what the objector asserts, that the master's oppressive disposition would still remain, it is yet something gained that the law no longer sanctions but now condemns its exercise, and that the slave's right is acknowledged, even if impediments are thrown in the way of its enjoyment. While at the worst nothing is lost; for moral means can still be used to convert the master, and enlist his will as well as his interest on the side of justice; and, as we have already remarked, serious obstacles to their success would have been removed, and they would act with greater efficacy. In the language of Charles Stuart, "as soon as the slaveholders were satisfied that they could never sell another pound of sugar, &c., wrung by force and fraud out of the outraged slave, but that they would be sure of an abundant market for the same things *fairly obtained* by hired and voluntary labor, they would be as eager for *immediate and thorough emancipation, at home*, under law, as the abolitionists now are, and in this awakened and dominant sense of *their own interest*, benevolence would have a better security for the new liberty on these principles bestowed, than all the special justices in the world could yield. We have a

striking instance of this in Antigua.* It was *policy*, not righteousness—*interest*, not benevolence, which prompted the former slaveholders of that island to the *immediate* and *thorough* emancipation of their slaves, on the spot. Yet it was a *perfectly voluntary act*,—properly speaking, *their own act*, in view of exactly the same influences as all the world's abstaining from slave produce would exercise universally upon slaveholders; and the same sense of interest which prompted them to the act, has been found ten thousand times more efficient than any *extraneous superintendence* could possibly have been, in securing the rights of the weaker party."

OBJECTION III. The practice of abstinence must necessarily lead to great waste of things in themselves good. You must throw away all the slave-produced goods in your possession; for if it was sinful to buy them, it is sinful to use them.

We reply; the inference is not sustained by the premises, for to throw away the articles, would as much encourage slavery, as to use them. If their price has gone into the hands of the slaveholder, all the support which slavery can derive from them has already been secured, and so far as the influence on that system of iniquity is concerned, one disposition of them will be the same as another. If, then, we abstain from all future purchases which will put money into the slaveholder's pocket, and from the use of those things whose place, when they are consumed, will be supplied by such purchases, there is no occasion to waste or destroy what we have already purchased. So it seems to us; but we leave this question to each one's conscience, hoping no one will refuse full obedience to that monitor. We may remark, however, that even admitting the alleged necessity, the objection proceeds on the utterly erroneous assumption, that destruction is *of course* waste. Use itself results in destruction, but it is not deemed waste. Why? Because the good enjoyed in using and so consuming the article, is greater than would flow from its preservation; and therefore preservation would be the real waste. If, then, in any case, the *entire and instant destruction* would produce more good than the *use* of an article, such use would be the true waste, and destruction the true economy. The seed sown in our fields is not wasted. If the speedy abolition of slavery should be the effect of an instant destruction of all the slave produce now in existence, would not the harvest be worth the seed?

Another thought may be worth presenting. The apprehended waste, it is clear, can only come from the general adoption of the practice we recommend. If such general adoption should be instantaneous, its necessity and reason would very speedily cease;

* Since that was penned, other West India islands have abolished the apprenticeship system, which was a remnant of slavery, not from conscience, but interest. The odes written, and addresses delivered, in celebration of this event, even by persons who do not agree with us as to the duty of abstinence, show that they do not, in real life, regard as valid the objection we are considering.

as slavery would be almost immediately abolished; and the goods on hand—not having had time to perish—could be innocently used. Their consumption, then, would not uphold a system which had ceased to exist. If not instantaneous, then, during its gradual progress, slave-raised goods would be consumed as now by those who have no scruples on the subject, and the gradual spread of these scruples being accompanied by a gradual disappearance of slave produce, and the introduction equally gradual of the fruits of free labor, there would be no waste of either.

OBJECTION IV. A fourth objection is made up of the statement of extreme cases, and the allegation that it is impossible entirely to abstain. We are asked, what shall be done by the crews of vessels driven by storms into slaveholding ports; or by men who become convinced of the sinfulness of slavery, while residing in the midst of a slave state, where to remain or whence to escape, without the use of slave produce, is alike impossible. We are reminded that if we travel in stage-coach or steam-boat, we shall find slave cotton in the linings of the one and the bedding and tablecloths of the other;—that in every book or paper which we read, we handle the unclean thing, and that even anti-slavery publications must be suspended till paper unstained with slavery can be procured to write and print upon. Nay, that *then* the difficulty will not be escaped, for the coin with which we pay the printer, and the boards of his office floor, as well as of our own dwelling houses, are perhaps made of slave-wrought materials.

To all this we answer, extreme cases do not make general rules, and the necessity of the case justifies nothing which is not necessary. It was well replied by a Quaker woman in Vermont, to one who urged this objection, “if thou can’t not avoid soiling thy shoe-soles, that is no reason for thy wading through the middle of the mud-puddle.” Let those who start these difficulties, be cautious to abstain from the fruits of slave-labor in all but the really “extreme cases,” and never to use them but when it is absolutely necessary, and we will promise not to quarrel with them about their exceptions.

In reply to that form of the objection which presents the difficulties that would attend the prosecution of the anti-slavery enterprise, it might not be impertinent to ask the objector if he would deem it right for an abolitionist to hold slaves, for the purpose of making money to give to the Anti-Slavery Society? If not, why may he for the same purpose hire others to do the same thing?

Once more. For what purpose are we told that difficulties attend the maintenance of our doctrine, and that ingenious objections, hard to be disposed of, can be brought against it? If all this may be true, and yet the doctrine may be right and sound, then it is not disproved by the statement of these facts, and the argument against it, grounded on them, is without force. But if the doctrine cannot be correct, concerning which such facts may be truly alleged, then that of our opponents, who maintain that it is

right to use slave produce, must be unsound and untrue. For they cannot deny that very strong arguments, and extremely difficult to be answered, can be arrayed against their doctrine, and against the claims to consistency of that man who at the same moment condemns slavery as a sin, and holds out the principal inducement to its commission. If the objection has any weight against us, then, it has at least as much against its authors. Let them, before urging it, wait till they have fairly proved that a voluntary participation in the fruits of unrequited toil, is free from liability to serious objections grounded on the principles of moral rectitude.

E. Wright's admission, (A. S. Quarterly Magazine, Vol. I., p. 398,) that we should be unwilling to use the products extorted from the toil of our near relatives, were they in slavery, and that "we should feel it a *duty* to abstain even at some inconvenience," if we had any chance of thereby exerting a moral influence in their favor, appears to us to confirm the doctrine of this address. Unless partaking the fruits of their unpaid labor sanctions its extactions, why should we be unwilling to use them? Why "not feel like sweetening our tea with sugar bought at the price of a brother's blood," unless to do so would make us partners in the wrong inflicted on our brother? But "have we not *all* one Father?" Are we not all,—bond and free,—brethren of one great family?

We are not aware that any other objections to our views have been offered, except such as have been already anticipated and met in the preceding pages, or such as are too frivolous to deserve a serious answer. We do not expect to remove all doubt from every mind, or so to solve every conceivable difficulty, and reply to every ingenious cavil, as to satisfy the captious, and convince the wilful and predetermined skeptic. Enough has been said to call attention to the subject presented, and to stimulate honest minds to inquiry and reflection. To you, friends of the slave, pledged champions of the rights of man, we now submit the question, whether you will elevate your standard of principle and action to the summit level of a pure morality, or lower it to that of a worldly policy, a supple, circumstance-moulded expediency; whether your practice shall be such as will steel the slaveholder against your arguments and appeals, and worse than neutralize your influence on his mind;—or whether it shall exhibit such a preference of right to convenience, of the interests of humanity to personal comfort, as will extort his admiration, and be worthy of his imitation. To your own consciences, in the sight of the motive-reading eye, we leave the decision.

In behalf of the Committee appointed by the Requited Labor Convention, to prepare an address on the duty of abstaining from slave produce.

LEWIS C. GUNN.